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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Transportation Committee

Date: September 19, 2008

From: Ross Patronsky, Senior Planner;

**Re:** Major Capital Projects in *GO TO* 2040

The time is quickly approaching when a capital program element of the comprehensive plan needs to be identified. This memo describes the approach that will be used to develop the capital program element.

## **Scenario Evaluation Approach**

Before capital projects are addressed, systematic investments, strategies, and policies will be evaluated using a scenario planning process, as described at the August meeting of the Transportation committee. As discussed, four thematic plan scenarios have been identified and will be tested and evaluated using a subset of the approved indicators.

At this stage of scenario testing, no specific capital projects will be identified. Rather, the capacity of transportation networks will be systematically adjusted to reflect the implementation of that thematic scenario. Each scenario will then be evaluated against the key indicators including financial implications. By the fall of 2009 a preferred scenario will be constructed taking the most desirable aspects of the four alternatives. This preferred scenario will provide the framework within which capital projects will be evaluated.

## **Capital Project Approach**

The proposed approach to capital projects will include several simultaneous activities, including 1) identification of potential projects; 2) development of evaluation measures; and 3) identification of fiscal constraints. The process for each of these is described in more detail below.

1. The "universe" of potential capital projects to consider will be developed. This will start with the extensive and robust set of projects in the 2030 RTP, combined with the numerous corridor and project studies currently underway, as well as other project ideas that have been submitted. Transportation agencies will be asked to submit any new projects that were not considered in past plans, and the public will have an

opportunity to propose new projects during the public input period for scenario evaluation in 2009. Outreach to transportation agencies to update existing projects or add new projects is recommended to begin immediately.

- 2. Evaluation measures will be developed to determine the effectiveness of capital projects at moving the region toward its vision. Committee input on the development of these measures will begin in late 2008 or early 2009. CMAP has contracted with the Volpe Center, the research branch of USDOT, to assist with the development of these measures. The performance measures used to evaluate capital projects are scheduled to be endorsed by the Board and MPO in the summer of 2009.
- 3. Consistent with federal requirements, the recommended capital projects in the plan will be fiscally constrained. To support this, a financial plan that identifies likely revenues will be developed by summer 2009.

These activities will come together in fall 2009, when staff will develop a proposed capital element that consists of specific projects testing their performance against the endorsed measures. The final list of fiscally constrained capital projects will be released for an extensive agency and public review period, revised as necessary and submitted for Board and MPO endorsement in early 2010. It is expected that additional capital projects that are high regional priorities consistent with the preferred scenario but which do not fit within our fiscal constraints will be identified and highlighted as well.

The capital element, along with a new Transportation Improvement Program, will subjected to the required conformity analysis and be released for additional comment as part of the comprehensive plan in the summer of 2010. Board and MPO approval will be sought in October of 2010.

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